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By-Eslinger, Troy R.
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In 1966, with a special grant, Lees Junior College established a Chair of Appalachian Sociology. The greater involvement thus allowed showed the need for sub-professional help, especially in welfare and day-care centers. This project set out to (1) recruit those who, with two years of training, could fill such jobs: (2) arrange articulation with senior colleges to allow credit for any who pursue a professional career: (3) coordinate its program with local agencies most likely to hire its graduates. The courses could be terminal or transfer, emphasizing basic sociology and social welfare, and including liberal arts, field work with agencies, and special service community projects. Recruitment was directed to current and prospective students and to aults in the area. In the two years of the program, 347 students enrolled: 22 went on for a B.A. Coordination with outside agencies was achieved once a salary scale and job category were set for these workers with less than a degree but more than high school. Widening its scope in the second year, the project added three consultant/instructors. Though certain state agency habits at first slowed the project, it later spurred a few agency changes. It revealed the college's role in community welfare, student reluctance to remain subprofessional, and the need for both undergraduate and graduate work-study programs in the agencies. Even those without a B.A. would benefit the community with their knowledge of society's needs. (HH)

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F I N A L R E P O R T

TITLE I

SPECIAL PROJECT: RECRUITMENT & TRAINING OF SOCIAL WELFARE ASSISTANTS

PROJECT DIRECTORS

Dr. F. K. Parker
William N. Ryan
William Strawn

SUBMITTED TO:

James Y. McDonald, Coordinator,
Title I Projects in Higher Education
Act of 1965

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SUBMITTED BY:

Troy R. Eslinger, President
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LEES JUNIOR COLLEGE
Jackson, Kentucky

SPECIAL PROJECT: RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING
OF SOCIAL WELFARE ASSISTANTS

AT

LEES JUNIOR COLLEGE
Jackson, Kentucky

PERIOD: June 1966 - August 1968

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I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

In the Spring of 1966, Lees Junior College received impetus for greater involvement in the social and sociological problems of eastern Kentucky. A special gift of $150,000 was received by the College for the partial endowment of a Chair in Appalachian Sociology.

As involvement increased, certain needs within the region became clearer, more sharply focused. Readily apparent was the increasing need for sub-professionals in a variety of fields related to social work -- welfare aides and day care center assistants in particular.

The purpose of this project, then, was conceived as:

(1) Recruitment of persons who could, with training at the two-year college level, be prepared to serve effectively in the role of social work aide or day care center assistant, as well as in other areas of social responsibility;

(2) Articulation with senior colleges and universities for acceptance of course credits for those persons -- having become inspired to make a career in social work -- to transfer after completion of the requirements at Lees;

(3) Coordination with the various public and private agencies who would serve as the logical employers of persons who complete the training program.

II. OPERATION OF THE PROJECT.

A. DEVELOPMENT OF A CURRICULUM.

The curriculum for this special program at the College was designed in such manner that the courses could stand on their own, but at the same time be acceptable for transfer toward the bachelor's degree. Emphasis was placed on introductory or survey courses to sociology and social welfare. However, other more general liberal arts courses were made an integral part of the program -- English, philosophy, psychology, home economics, marriage and family.

Generic to the teaching of the courses was a distinct involvement of the students in field visitations to institutions and agencies, as well as with special individual or small-group service projects in the surrounding communities.

B. RECRUITMENT FOR THE PROJECT.

Recruitment for this project was directed along a dual path: (1) among students already enrolled, or who were potentially interested in enrolling as students at the College; and (2) among adults in the community who appeared as likely candidates for social service sub-professional careers. The former proved to be a far more fertile field.

During the two years of operation of the project, 347 students were enrolled in the basic courses in this program, with some 22 persons electing to carry on toward a bachelor's degree in either social work or sociology. Response from non-students was very meagre -- no more than four or five during the entire two-year period.

C. ARTICULATION WITH SENIOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Articulation with senior colleges and universities was not altogether easy. It was early learned that considerable jealousy exists between those institutions who insist that instruction in social work is incontrovertibly the province of the graduate, professional school -- and those which operate at the undergraduate (four-year) level. Both, however, looked askant at the junior college proposing to enter the field!

But since the work at Lees was designed for the sub-professional (with transferability of credit for those desiring to move on into the professional level) this obstacle was largely overcome.

It would appear that the program as defined (and to some degree later refined) is fairly stable and reliably established as a vital program in the Lees Junior College curriculum. Time alone will tell the eventual outcome.

D. COORDINATION WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AGENCIES

Coordination efforts with public and private agencies met with varying success.

Three "Shirtsleeve Seminars" were held on campus during the two-year period. These were extremely helpful in highlighting the specific problems of staffing, especially in children's homes and in day-care centers. Representatives from at least six homes were involved, along with members of the State Departments of Economic Security, Child Welfare, and Personnel. Miss Betty Kerlin, of the Kentucky Commission on Children and Youth, was most helpful.

One of the basic problems in the realm of the sub-professional, it soon became apparent, is the matter of salary. A considerable time-lag was experienced within the Department of Personnel in regulating salary differentials for persons with and persons without special training.

The lines were clearly drawn between the degree-holding professional social worker and the non-degree worker. No problem existed there. The difficulty in the Lees College project arose out of the delay in developing a specific category for the "Aide" or "Technician" -- the person with less than a degree in social work, yet with more training than simply the high school diploma.

The activities of the Lees College project must therefore be accorded credit for the establishment (or at least spurring on to that) of a new classification of the sub-professional aide or technician which has at last become a reality.

The Kentucky Welfare Association held a dynamic Regional Conference on the Lees College campus during the period of this project -- at the invitation of the College -- and with specific attention addressed to the kind of approach to social service envisioned by the project. In addition, seven students involved in the project were provided the opportunity of attending the Annual Convention of KWA, held in Louisville in December, 1967. They came away with sparkling aspirations.

III. PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT.

The project was not quite through the first year of operation when its

Director, Dr. F. K. Parker, was stricken with a heart attack and died. This was a severe blow to the project, a traumatic shock, because of the central importance of Dr. Parker's expertise in developing the program around which the project revolved.

However, William N. Ryan, then Assistant to the President of the College, assumed acting directorship and proceeded to hold the project together in admirable fashion. Mr. Richard Schneider, (C.M.S.W.), Director of The Buckhorn Childcare Agency (at Buckhorn, Kentucky, just 25 miles from Jackson) accepted the challenge to complete the instructional and field work supervision for the remainder of that semester.

During the second year, additional professional personnel were brought to the campus for consultancy and to serve as instructors in the program. Miss Peggy Webb, from the Department of Sociology and Social Field Work, Eastern Kentucky University, taught the course in Social Field Work at Lees. Dr. John Stephenson, Professor in the Department of Sociology, University of Kentucky, taught Appalachian Sociology and served as consultant. In addition, Mr. Ross Blount, special Social Worker serving in the mountain area of eastern Kentucky under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church, U.S., proved most helpful in outlining plans for future development of the program. Through the services of these consultants, perspectives were immensely widened.

William Strawn, Dean of Students at the College, was assigned responsibility for shepherding the Project during the last two months of the two-year period. His recruitment of students indicates a continuing and deepening interest in social service as a career for increasing numbers of people.

IV. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT.

While it would be manifestly untrue to lay claim to the accomplishment of

all that the project set out to do, it would be equally unjust to hint that the project was a failure!

Time-lags within the State agencies slowed down certain aspects, but these were overcome. Indeed, some of the changes made within the Agencies may well be attributed to the exigencies of this project and the prodding which it stimulated.

Growing out of this experience, also, can be seen a reliably stable approach, on the part of the College, to its continuing role in the community, the region, and even the state, in the fields of Sociology and Social Welfare.

Further, it has become more and more clear that the college student, even though at first fastening his eyes yearningly on the quick sub-professional rating available after two years of college, will not long be content to remain at that level. Nor should he.

There is even some indication that the "non-student" adult may be stimulated to pursue his training all the way to a degree.

This implies, therefore, the need for serious consideration on the part of the public agencies of establishing work-study programs (similar to those already in effect at the graduate level) for the undergraduate level as well.

CONCLUSION: The evidence of mounting interest in social service careers, in a general way -- and the deepening involvement of Lees Junior College in community and regional service, in a particular way -- join in declaring that the Special Project on Recruitment and Training of Social Welfare Assistants has been of very real value and significance.

Through exposure to the courses, twenty-two students have been inspired to move immediately into social service careers. Nearly 350 others have had opportunities for greater understanding of the needs of society about them. The ripple-effect of such influence is unmeasurable.